



## **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

7 Twin Circle Drive, Arlington, MA 02474

### **Memorandum**

**To:** Board of Selectmen, Arlington, Massachusetts

**From:** Transportation Advisory Committee

**Subject:** Recommendations re Crosswalk at Harlow Street

**Reference:** Letter from Board on 5 June 2008 re Crosswalk at Harlow and Mass Ave

**Date:** 11 August 2008

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### **Background**

A resident of 264 Massachusetts Avenue requested a crosswalk across Massachusetts Avenue, near Harlow Street. This area has the following characteristics:

- The nearest existing crosswalks (at Tufts Street and at Orvis Road) are approximately 500 feet away.
- The nearest signalized crosswalks (at Foster/Linwood) is approximately 800 feet away.
- Average Daily Traffic exceeds 20,000 vehicles (several measurements between 2000 and 2005)
- Street width is 66 feet, with on-street parking. Although no lanes are marked, this section of Massachusetts Avenue is permitted to function as a 4-lane undivided road.
- A crosswalk at Harlow would serve an MBTA bus stop that is not currently served by a crosswalk.
- Peak hour pedestrian counts were performed in September 2002 when the crossing rate was 20+ per hour.

A need for a pedestrian crossing at Harlow Street has already been identified as part of the Massachusetts Avenue Corridor project. The situation here, in terms of road configuration, traffic volume, and pedestrian usage, is similar to Mass. Ave at Trowbridge Street, where Leader Bank had requested a crosswalk in 2002. On 1/28/2003, the Transportation Advisory Committee voted the following for the 2002 request: "The committee unanimously voted that a pedestrian crossing provision near Trowbridge should be included in the long-term plan for the Massachusetts Avenue corridor. However, no crosswalk should be installed at this time given the hazards associated with uncontrolled crosswalks on busy multilane roads, and the potential for reduced pedestrian safety."

### **Recommendation**

Our recommendation is the same as for the previous request: a pedestrian crossing near Harlow Street should be part of the Massachusetts Avenue corridor plans, but no crosswalk should be installed at this time given the hazards associated with uncontrolled crosswalks on busy multilane roads, and the potential for reduced pedestrian safety.

This recommendation follows Federal Highway Administration advice, given in both the *Pedestrian Facilities User's Guide* (2002) and in the 2007 proposed amendments to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Section 3B.18). The 2007 proposed guidance states that "Marked crosswalks alone, without other substantial measures designed to reduce traffic speeds, shorten crossing distances, enhance driver awareness of the crossing, and/or provide active warning of pedestrian presence, should not be installed across uncontrolled roadways where...the roadway has four or more lanes of travel without a raised median or pedestrian refuge island and an ADT of 12,000 vehicles per day or greater."

TAC invites interested residents and businesses to join us in our effort to develop a balanced plan that best serves the needs of motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, residents and businesses along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor. Respectfully,

Transportation Advisory Committee  
Scott Smith – Member  
Edward Starr - Chair

### **Transportation Advisory Committee Members:**

Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Jean Clark, Lt. Paul Conroy, Susan Doctrow, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise,  
Michael Rademacher, Scott Smith, Edward Starr, and Laura Wiener

**Web site; [www.tac.arlington.ma.us/](http://www.tac.arlington.ma.us/)**